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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire on reading was administered to every student in the St. Joseph, Missouri, "Rainbow" program for gifted and talented readers. The same questionnaire was administered to a cross sectional sample of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in regular classrooms in the same district. Among other things, results showed that (1) 75% of the Rainbow students reported reading when they entered kindergarten, while only 46% of the regular children made the same claim; (2) the largest percentage of Rainbow students learned to read at age 4, while the largest percentage of regular students said they did not learn to read until age 6; (3) 97% of Rainbow students and 86% of regular students responded that someone at home had read to them before they entered school; (4) 56% of the Rainbow students and 49% of the regular students first learned to read from a family member; and (5) a high percentage of both groups used basal readers in kindergarten and first grade. Although some of the self-reported responses may be inaccurate, particularly from the regular students, the research still seems to support the conclusion that an eclectic, differentiated approach to reading instruction is the best for gifted and talented students. (The questionnaire is included.) (JL)

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A Differentiated Program in Reading for Gifted/Talented

by

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A Differentiated Program in Reading
for Gifted/Talented

Should a parent teach a preschooler to read, or should the parent wait until the child enters school and let the teacher instruct him in learning to read? When is a child ready to learn? These questions are often asked by parents and educators.

As the writer looked ahead to the future for the gifted/talented reader, he reflected back in literature searching for solutions to the questions posed. He administered a questionnaire to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students enrolled in the Gifted/Talented Rainbows Program in St. Joseph, Missouri's Public Schools. He also administered the same questionnaire to a selected cross-sectional sample of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, from the same school system, who were not in the program.

The Young Reader

Doman stated that a mother once asked a child expert when she should begin training her child. When the mother told the expert that the child was five years old, his response was that she had wasted the five best years of his life.[1]

After the age of two reading is more difficult to teach to children, Doman belives. Two things the parent needs to keep in mind are attitude and approach and size and orderliness of reading matter.[2] Doman indicates that young children learn from

television commercials while watching and listening to them. Young children may be reading signs while riding in an automobile with their parents. He further states that small children can learn to read, and they do. Young children can, are, and should learn to read.

According to Doman, the eighteen month old baby is very curious as he explores the world around him. He wants to know why things work. Adults often squelch this enthusiasm in the young child. Adults mistakenly think that the attention span of the young child is very short. A child's attention span, however, is limited by the amount of learning material he has around him.[3]

Doman states that between nine months and age four the young child has a higher ability to absorb information than he will ever possess. Yet most parents fail to provide learning opportunities for this age child.[4]

Language Acquisition Device

Clark reported on studies which substantiated the theory that children can and should be taught to read prior to school entry. She reported that linguists have a theory that between eighteen months and four years of age every child has an innate ordering device for learning called Language Acquisition Device (LAD).[5] Clark stated that the child's environment must be rich in language experience during this stage of his life. Never again will the child have an opportunity in his life to learn language as readily.

Experiments have been conducted with children ages two to four to teach them to read. In one study Clark reported that

45 children with IQ's ranging from 74 to 134 were brought to campus in small groups to view televised programs with puppets. The children represented various racial and ethnic groups as well as several socioeconomic levels. The goal was to discover the effectiveness of teaching two to four year olds some basic reading skills. names of letters, letter sounds, and a few basic words. That was prior to "Sesame Street."[6]

Clark's report indicated that the children were capable of absorbing much more than was expected, and all the children tested at the mastery level on all items. They showed significant growth at the .001 level over the control group of children. The most significant variable which accounted for the success of the experimental group was that their parents read to them. A follow-up study showed that many of these children were gifted and were accelerated in school placement.[7]

Clark reports that very few children are taught to read before entering school because professional educators have convinced parents that they should not teach their children to read. Clark believes that fewer children would need remedial reading if they learned to read before entering school.

Reading at Age Four

Labuda stated that many scholars have recognized that children have the potential to read at an early age. He reported that these scholars have suggested that age four is the most opportune time to begin reading instruction with children.[8] Labuda reported that opposition has come from educators who believe that readiness to read does not occur before a child reaches a mental age of six years or more. He referred to

Durkin's study of children who learned to read at an early age. Some of these children's IQ's were below 110, and they were superior readers for the first five years of school. The parents of these children held a high regard for learning and gave them encouragement.[9]

Intellectual Stimulation

Witty referred to Maya Pines' study of gifted children ages one through six. In the citation it was pointed out that a child's intelligence grows as much the first four years of his life as it does the next thirteen combined.[10] If a child is not stimulated intellectually in the early years, especially the middle or lower class child, he is almost certain to be doomed to failure in school.[11]

Witty stated that A. I. Gates, an outstanding reading authority, had suggested that four year old children could learn to read as well as theyunderstood spoken language. Witty suggested that if gifted children enter school not reading the teacher should make provisions to help them acquire reading skills as soon as possible.[12]

Myth About Gifted

Trezise stated that the myth that the gifted can take care of themselves is no more true of the intellectually gifted than it is of the athletically gifted.[13] He stated that if a gifted child comes to school knowing how to read, he should not be required to go through the same decoding skills with the rest of the class. Trezise reported that many bright children are required to learn again by the prescribed method. As a result many gifted students become very bitter and cynical about

reading and about school.

Research shows that gifted children are advanced in learning skills and learn in different ways than the average student.[14] According to Trezise, one higher cognitive process possessed by these children is the ability to conceptualize or synthesize experiences into original solutions. Conceptualizing involves language and the ability of the child to organize.

A Study

Price reported on a study of gifted children in public schools in Palm Beach, Florida. The study explored possible methods that had been used in grouping gifted children to learn to read and preschool experiences which related to their reading readiness.[15]

Price stated that questionnaires were distributed to parents of gifted fourth, fifth, and sixth graders to ascertain information about early reading experiences of their children. Findings revealed that seventy-six percent of these children were reading when they entered first grade. Some of the children had learned to read systematically before entering school while others had learned incidentally. Some of the youngsters had learned to read in nursery school.[16]

All parents in this study reported that their child had used a basal reader in the first grade. Most of the children were read to from the time they were babies. Early readers usually walk and talk earlier than their peers. Findings in the Palm Beach study revealed that those children who learned to read early also walked and talked early.[17]

Children Who Read Early

Cassidy and Vukelich reported that much of the early research on the precocious child supported evidence that gifted children read at an early age. They stated that Terman in 1925 found that half the subjects in his study could read prior to first grade entry.[18] A total of twenty-five percent had learned to read before the age of five. They also reported that Kasdon in 1958 found in a study of fifty college freshmen that slightly over half of that number could read before entering school. Strong did a similar study with junior high students, and her findings were about the same.[19]

In 1978 Cassidy and Vukelich did two studies of gifted four and five year olds to determine if they read early. The studies were done in a large suburban school district in Northern Delaware. The children were selected primarily through parent nomination. They were administered the Metropolitan Readiness Test (1974 edition). In the first study children with a stanine of four or above were chosen. In the second study only those children with a stanine of five or above were selected. The children were given the Slosson Intelligence Test. Cassidy and Vukelich worked with the two groups of children over a period of time using the Language Experience Approach. Only significant gains were found with those children who were already reading before the experiment.[20]

A Developmental Reading Program

Witty pointed out that the disadvantaged and slow learners have received the focus of attention while the gifted learner has been neglected. He stated that there were few reading

programs for the gifted and that literature on gifted education emphasized innovation but disregarded the role of reading for the gifted.[21]

In the genetic studies of gifted children Witty found that their best achievement was in reading and language, and their poorest was in writing and spelling. He found that fifty percent of gifted children learned to read before school entry; forty percent before age five, and some prior to age four. Their vocubulary was advanced over that of their peers. They learned quickly and were usually two grades above their peers in mastery of the curriculum. Gifted children were found in all social and racial groups, but were most prevalent in high socio-economic level homes according to Witty.[22]

Witty stated that gifted children need individual reading experience from the time they enter school. He indicated that a first grader who can read should be provided a variety of reading sources individually suited to his needs, and he should be given encouragement. For the verbally gifted child entering kindergarten if he can read, he should be given an opportunity to do so.

Reading for enjoyment, according to Witty, is a good feature of a developmental reading program for gifted. A variety of printed material should be made accessible to these students. An interest inventory may be given to ascertain topics of interest to gifted readers.

Gifted children have many rich and varied interests. Teachers should provide reading materials to help them gain more knowledge about their interests and hobbies.

According to Witty, gifted children who are reading at the beginning of kindergarten or first grade should be given every opportunity to develop and use their reading skills. He suggests that basal reading instruction in primary grades should be replaced by a balanced program to accommodate individual differences and interests of boys and girls. He recommends that the teacher use the Individualized Reading Approach as well as the Language Experience Approach with these children. These students then should become avid readers by the time they reach the fourth grade.[23]

The teacher of the gifted in reading should provide additional motivation through films, filmstrips, and television programs. Both the teacher and the school librarian can work together helping to find reading materials to meet the needs of gifted readers.[24]

Objectives to Meet Learning Styles

According to Trezise, reading programs for gifted should include objectives to meet varied learning styles. Gifted readers like to read deeper meaning into a simple story making it more complex than it actually is. That shows they are thinking it through and are responding to what they are reading.[25]

Trezise recommends three reading objectives for the gifted reader. They are: (1) read more widely, (2) read more critically, (3) read more creatively.[26]

To encourage the student to read more widely there are children's books available on a variety of themes and topics. Themes of universal interest are depicted in children's books. Trezise found that such themes included: death, sexual identity,

non-conformity, conflict in values, and cruelty among children as well as cruelty to animals.

Trezise contends that elementary teachers do not know the best children's literature to recommend to their gifted students. Instead, teachers only know their Scott Foresman, Allyn Bacon, Houghton Mifflin, or Ginn Series.[27] He states that they are less likely to know such authors as Judy Blume, Judith Viorst, or Norma Klein.

Gifted students, on the other hand, know their authors and the themes they use in their books. They are constantly looking for other books written by the same author. Trezise states that since gifted readers are "book centered", teachers should keep this in mind as they plan the right program for gifted students.[28]

In step two, read more critically, Trezise contends that reading should be considered a thinking process of changing visual symbols into meaning. It is crucial that critical reading for gifted goes beyond simple recall questions of the lower levels of the cognitive domain. These students should be able to paraphrase what they have read and apply it to different situations. Trezise further states that they should be able to analyze, to gain new insight, to make predictions and judgments, and to evaluate.

Like comprehension skills critical reading skills should be taught, Trezise states. Critical reading involves convergent thinking at higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Creative reading is the third step. Creative reading involves divergent thinking. Trezise states that creative readers bring

to the reading process their own ideas, feelings, attitudes and values.

Treuise believes that teachers of gifted students should be well versed in asking good open-ended questions. He states that the quality of student discussion depends on the teacher's ability to guide effective class discussion by asking good divergent questions.[29]

Wide Exposure to Literature

Witty contends that the gifted reader at intermediate and upper grade levels as well as high school needs more exposure and practice in critical reading. He further states that this student needs reading experience that will help him with his personal and social problems. The reading of biographies and autobiographies may help students to identify with some problems they have. A one to one discussion between pupil and teacher will prove beneficial to the gifted student, Witty declares.[30]

Witty believes that gifted students should be exposed to poetry and be encouraged to write original poems. He states that their poetry will tend to be of a superior quality and will often reveal problems these gifted children are encountering. Witty thinks that young children should be exposed to such authors as Dr. Seuss and A. A. Milne. Middle and high school students enjoy such authors as Nash, Guiterman, Millay, Dickinson, and Frost.

Witty states trat gifted students enjoy humorous books as well as humorous poetry. Some examples of humorous books young gifted children enjoy include: Homer Price, Dr. Seuss books, Disney illustrated books, and Dr. Doolittle.

The guidance in selection of appropriate reading materials is just as important at the secondary level with gifted students as it is at the elementary level. The teacher should play a dominant role in assisting the student to make the right choice. Witty states that gifted boys and girls may need to be tested periodically in both elementary and high school to ascertain their needs in the reading skills.

Witty also emphasizes the importance of creative reading by quoting E. Paul Torrance:[31]

"When a person reads creatively, he is sensitive to problems and possibilities in whatever he reads. He makes himself aware of the gaps in knowledge, the unsolved problems, the missing elements, things that are incomplete or out of focus...the creative reader sees new relationships, creates new combinations, synthesizes relatively unrelated elements into a coherent whole, redefines or transforms certain pieces of information to discover new uses, and builds onto what is known."

Witty firmly states that a planned program of differentiated reading is a must if gifted students are to receive the type of education they need. From an historical standpoint there has been a minimum amount of interest expressed regarding reading for the gifted in the literature. Witty noted that Lewis Terman did an early study on reading for the gifted. Other studies were done by Ruth Strang and Walter Burke.[32]

Witty states that a primary goal of instruction in reading for gifted is the development of a lasting interest and the habit of extensive reading. He emphasizes the importance of enrichment examples, especially for primary gifted children.

Witty described the Accelerated Learning Program in grades four, five, and six in Wichita's Gifted Program. It is a comprehensive gifted program providing enrichment activities in communication. Students have many opportunities to express themselves through speaking, writing, and research. Students learn about theme, plot, mood, characterization, and author's purpose in literature.[33]

Witty contends that in studying poetry, middle school age gifted students should learn verse and stanza forms, rhyme scheme, figurative language, symbolism, theme, and tone. In studying folklore and mythology, he states that middle school gifted students are introduced to some of the basic themes of literature such as hero concept, predestination, and conflict between God and man. Activities may include nonverbal communication, designing costumes, scenery, and musical accompaniment for plays and poems.[34]

Witty further states that middle school gifted boys and girls are capable of reviewing children's books. Some reviews may be worthy of publication. A humanities program may be implemented at the middle school level for gifted students. The program could be developed around themes. He also believes that students at this age level should be introduced to a foreign language. Finally, Witty declares that independent study and problem solving will challenge the gifted middle school student. Students at this level also learn to produce their own films and videotapes through a wide range of reading experiences.

At the high school level Witty recommends enrichment experiences in literature and humanities. Topics such as

contemporary poets, Black literature, the theater, and film making prove to be productive. The Thematic Approach in humanities with an integration of music, art, and literature is recommended by Witty.[35]

Three Enrichment Strategies

Cassidy describes three strategies that enrich learning, promote the exchange of ideas, and encourage independent research. He states that at least half of the student's day is spent in some type of reading activity. Merely placing a gifted student in a higher grade level reader is not enough. Cassidy thinks that the student needs activities that provide opportunities for independent research, expanded learning, and exchange of ideas.[36]

Cassidy's "Think Box", Inquiry Reading, and "Operation Interaction" can give gifted readers both enrichment and a challenge at the same time. The techniques are a part of IMPACT (Improving Materials and Programs for the Academically and Creatively Talented).[37] This is a comprehensive program which Cassidy helped to develop working with administrators, teachers of the gifted, reading specialists, and classroom teachers in New Castle, Delaware School District. The activities were developed to be used with talented students in grades two through six.

The "Think Box" is a collection of task cards centering on a theme students may be studying. The advantage of this technique is that talented students may use the cards to work independently as other students work on skills that have already been mastered by the talented. The box's activities center on

seven major goals which include: increasing students' knowledge in areas of interest; applying basic skills essential for independent learning; developing and refining thinking skills; developing productive creativity and originality; developing sense of responsibility to set realistic goals; enhancing enjoyment and appreciation of learning and developing in students an awareness and acceptance of themselves.

Task cards are placed in a large cardboard box. The box is attractively decorated to depict the theme of its contents. Some typical themes include travel, nutrition, shapes, fairy tales, probability, and newspapers. Some themes are developed around specific books.

A second technique Cassidy developed was "Inquiry Reading." When readers, even those who are skilled, are sent to the library to do research without a plan of action, it can turn out to be a frustrating experience. The teachers in New Castle School District discovered that an "Inquiry Reading" activity could usually be completed in twenty days with the students spending forty-five minutes a day in the library doing research.[38] One student may work alone, or a group may work together. According to Cassidy, talented or gifted readers usually do not need to work on word recognition skills; however, they may need extra work on the higher levels of comprehension.

Cassidy recommends alternatives to work sheets and workbooks. He says to give students such references as Barnell-Loft series on Getting the Main Idea and Drawing Conclusions, Continental Press's Reading Thinking Skills, and College Skills Center's 88 Passages to Develop Reading Comprehension. Students complete

assignments independently. Then they may come together as a group to decide on correctness of their answers.[38]

Cassidy concludes that it does take time and energy on the part of the teacher to make reading instruction productive and worthwhile for gifted and talented readers, but the rewards are certainly worth the effort.

An Equal Opportunity to Achieve

Bagford contends that unless teachers give students, including the gifted, an equal opportunity to achieve to their fullest potential, this nation's greatest human resources are going to waste.[39] He states that just because a student is gifted in one area does not mean that he is gifted in all areas. He may be gifted in one subject and average in another or even below average. We may erroneously assume that a student's needs are similar to his classmates. The needs of gifted readers, on the other hand, vary considerably from the norm.

Bagford suggests some general program considerations for gifted readers such as: a strong content emphasis as well as strong value emphasis. The value emphasis is important for those going into leadership roles later in life, according to Bagford.

Bagford suggests grouping of gifted students together for reading so they can relate to each other, but also some grouping of other students with them at times. He believes there should be fewer skill oriented programs for gifted. Vocabulary development, advanced reading skills and literature are all suggested for gifted students in reading. Helping gifted students to develop and expand their vocabulary is essential.[40]

Bagford also emphasizes the importance of teaching interpretive and critical reading skills. With a literature emphasis and less time devoted to skill instruction gifted readers will learn through extensive reading. Students interpretive and critical reading skills grow and develop as their mind develops through more reading. Bagford believes in introducing gifted students to good books instead of permitting them to waste time on trivial content.

Bagford states that it is not as difficult as it once was for teachers to identify good literature for students. Curriculum committees may develop units around themes. Bagford mentions two books which include lists of books for gifted readers. They are Books for the Gifted Child by Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris and the Junior Great Books Series.[41] The Junior Great Books Series is a graded selection of classic books for grades two through twelve.

Enrichment Triad Activities

Cagney and Sakiey recommend activities based on Joe Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model to use with gifted students in reading. Type I activities are general exploratory type calling for literal comprehension of reading material. The second type develops thinking and feeling processes which includes critical, creative, and divergent thinking.[42] In addition Type II focuses on problem solving skills, awareness development and sensitivity training. Type III includes individual student project, in-depth studies resulting in a product such as a report worthy of publication. All three types involve literal comprehension. The second and third types of activities require inferential and critical

comprehension. Inquiry skills are utilized. Vocabulary development is a vital part of the program. Study skills such as outlining, summarizing, notetaking, and gathering information are put into effect by utilizing Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model in reading.[43]

According to Cagney and Sakiey many gifted students are placed in programs and are given inappropriate enrichment activities that are not challenging. Renzulli's Enrichment Model is qualitatively different and is a good model, especially to use with gifted in individualized reading.

Individualized Reading Approach

Wooster related the story of a group of gifted fifth graders who had read The Slave Dancer, a Newbery award-winning book by Paul Fox. They were doing a synectics activity related to the book. The activity involved forcing a relationship comparing how the slave ship was like a family. Students were using creative thinking ability to extend and reach through reading.[44]

Reading for the gifted student leads to creative and critical thinking, self-awareness, decision-making, and problem solving. Wooster recommends the Individualized Reading Approach with gifted students. She states that the following activities could be used effectively with this approach: students organize a fact file or facts treasure chest with index cards; students set a goal of how many books they think they can read by a designated calendar date. As students read, they list title and author and share their books in small groups. Apply creativity techniques in individualized reading such as: Fluency listing, Synectics, and Scamper. Ask questions beyond the literal level of comprehension

about books the student has read. Have students write letters to the author of the book or to the main character explaining their feelings about the book. Students may role play a book character or keep a diary for a few days including the feelings of the main character as well as events which occurred. The list of possibilities is endless.[45]

Bloom's Taxonomy

The writer's wife is an assistant professor of Education teaching kindergarten and first level children in the Horace Mann Laboratory School at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville. She utilizes teacher-made learning centers in both classrooms with a variety of enrichment activities not only for gifted children but for children of all ability levels. She has individualized the reading program for gifted students. The reading assignments and activities are primarily based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Her gifted students are challenged at the higher levels of the taxonomy with appropriate activities.

Summary of Literature Review

The writer's review of literature was extensive. He found in the study that most of the authorities seemed to agree on the teaching of reading to gifted/talented students. An individualized or differentiated approach seemed to be the preferred or recommended technique to use with these students.

Report on Survey

The writer developed an instrument on reading using similar questions he had seen on other reading surveys. He conducted a survey of students in St. Joseph, Missouri School District's

Gifted/Talented Program. The program, called "Rainbow", was implemented the fall semester of 1980 at the fourth and fifth grade levels. It is currently in its third year, and it expanded into grades six and seven during the 1981-82 school year. It has expanded into the eighth grade during the 1982-83 school year. The seventh and eighth grade gifted students are housed in the four middle schools. The elementary school Rainbows is a pull-out program. Five percent of the top students in grades four, five and six has been identified in all the city schools of St. Joseph, and parents provide transportation one day each week to Skaith Elementary School where the Rainbows program is housed. Three teachers currently work with these students. A different group comes each day, Monday through Thursday. Friday is reserved for teacher planning and conferences.

During the 1980-81 and 1981-82 school years, the Department of Education at Missouri Western State College placed an education student in a school teaching experience each semester in the Rainbows classroom. The Experience II in Teaching college students were supervised by the writer. Three of the four college students who did their teaching experience had taken the methods course on Gifted/Talented with the writer.

The writer decided to administer the questionnaire to every student in Rainbows Program. He also decided to secure a cross-sectional sample of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students from regular classrooms in the same school system. The sampling was not acquired by a random selection of students. Instead the writer selected three schools representing varied socio-economic levels representative of the schools throughout the city of

St. Joseph from which Rainbow students came.

The results of the survey of the two groups are reported in the following table:

Questionnaire

Total: Rainbow (Gifted/Talented) 136

Total: Regular (Classroom) 126

1. Were you already reading when you entered kindergarten?

	Rainbow	Regular
Yes	102-75%	58 - 46%
No	24 - 18%	54 - 43%
Don't know	10 - 7%	14 - 11%

2. At what age did you learn to read? Please indicate in years.

	Rainbow	Regular
two	3 - 2%	2 - 2%
three	19 - 14%	11 - 9%
four	47 - 35%	27 - 21%
five	37 - 27%	30 - 24%
six	20 - 15%	46 - 36%
seven		5 - 4%
Don't know	10 - 7%	5 - 4%

3. Did someone at home read to you before you entered school?

	Rainbow	Regular
Yes	132 - 97%	108 - 86%
No	4 - 3%	9 - 7%
Don't know		9 - 7%

4. If someone did read to you, who was/were that person(s)?

	Rainbow	Regular
Mother	23 - 17%	30 - 24%
Father	3 - 2%	1 - 1%
Mother/Father	49 - 36%	41 - 33%
Mother/Father, Grandparent	15 - 10%	21 - 17%
Siblings and/or parent	19 - 14%	11 - 9%
Other	5 - 7%	3 - 2%

5. How did you first learn to read? Check only one.

	Rainbow	Regular
A family member	76 - 56%	62 - 49%
I learned on my own	29 - 21%	11 - 8%
My kindergarten teacher	13 - 10%	12 - 10%
My first grade teacher	9 - 7%	35 - 29%

6. When you entered kindergarten, how were you grouped for reading?

	Rainbow	Regular
Basal reader	117 - 86%	105 - 83%
Individualized (the teacher worked with you alone)	12 - 9%	14 - 11%
Don't know	7 - 5%	7 - 6%

7. In first grade how were you grouped for reading? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Basal reader	128 - 94%	112 - 89%
Individualized	8 - 6%	9 - 7%
Don't know		7 - 6%
		Both 1-

8. Have you always been in:

	Rainbow	Regular
Basal reader	125 - 92%	110 - 87%
Individualized	2 - 1%	2 - 2%
Both	9 - 7%	12 - 10%
		No Response 2

9. If you have always been in a basal reading group was it:

	Rainbow		Regular
Top group	121 - 89%		45 - 36%
Average group	6 - 4%		52 - 41%
Below Average	0		22 - 17%
Both	9 - 7%	D.K.	7 - 6%

10. How does your regular classroom teacher group you for reading this year? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Basal Reader	135 - 99%	126 - 100%
Individualized	1 - 1%	
		Both 2

11. If you are in a reading group this year, do you know which one it is? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Top	122 - 90%	49 - 39%
Average	14 - 10%	51 - 40%
Below Average		26 - 21%

12. Do you enjoy reading? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Yes	132 - 97%	106 - 84%
No	4 - 3%	20 - 16%

13. Do you read for:

	Rainbow	Regular
Pleasure	46 - 34%	17 - 14%
Assignment	6 - 4%	19 - 15%
Both	83 - 61%	86 - 68%
		No Response 4

14. Do you sometimes spend you own money to buy books? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Yes	83 - 61%	46 - 37%
No	53 - 39%	71 - 56%
		No Response 9

15. Which do you prefer? Check one:

	Rainbow	Regular
Reading in a group	22 - 16%	65 - 52%
Reading by myself	112 - 82%	45 - 36%
no response	2 - 2%	16 - 12%

16. Your age?

	Rainbow	Regular
9	33 - 24%	31 - 25%
10	43 - 32%	52 - 41%
11	53 - 39%	33 - 26%
12	12 - 5%	7 - 6%
13		2 - 2%

17. Your sex:

	Rainbow	Regular
Male	80 - 59%	67 - 53%
Female	56 - 41%	59 - 47%

18. The grade you are in this year.

	Rainbow	Regular
4th	33 - 24%	45 - 36%
5th	43 - 32%	49 - 39%
6th	60 - 44%	32 - 25%

19. If you are in a Gifted/Talented program, how many years have you been in it? For Rainbow only.

First year	68 - 50%
Second year	33 - 24%
Third year	35 - 26%

Discussion of Findings

Seventy-five percent of gifted/talented students answered in the affirmative that they were reading when they entered kindergarten, and forty-six percent of regular classroom children answered likewise. The writer was not surprised at the percentage of gifted/talented readers, but he doubted that forty-six percent of regular classroom students were reading when they entered kindergarten.

The largest percentage of Rainbow students indicated they learned to read at age four while the largest percentage of regular students stated that they did not learn to read until age six. The writer, however, questions the large number of students in the regular classroom who reported that they were reading prior to age six.

Ninety-seven percent of Rainbow students and eighty-six percent of regular students responded that someone at home had read to them before they entered school. The largest percentage of both groups indicated that their parents were the ones who most frequently read to them.

The majority, fifty-six percent, of Rainbow students indicated they first learned to read from a family member while forty-nine percent of regular students marked the same. A larger percent, twenty-nine, of regular students reported that they learned to read from their first grade teacher.

By and large, a high percentage of both groups (Rainbows 86%, Regular 83%), were placed in a basal reading group in kindergarten. In first grade the percentage was even higher (Rainbows 94%, Regular 89% in the basal reader).

Ninety-two and eighty-seven percent of Rainbow and regular students respectively reported that they had always been in a basal reader. Eighty-nine percent of Rainbow students and thirty-six percent of regular students indicated they were usually in the top reading group. Only four percent of Rainbow students and forty-one percent of regular were usually in the average group. None of Rainbow students was in the below average group while seventeen percent of regular students stated they were usually in this group.

Ninety-nine percent of Rainbow students and one hundred percent of regular students checked that their regular classroom teacher grouped them in a basal reader this year. Ninety percent of Rainbow and thirty-nine percent of regular students reported being in the top reading group this school year. Only ten percent of Rainbow and forty percent of regular students indicated they were in the average group. Twenty-one percent of regular students stated they were in the below average group.

Ninety-seven percent of Rainbow and eighty-four percent of regular students specified that they enjoyed reading. Only three percent of Rainbow and sixteen percent of regular classroom students stated that they did not enjoy reading.

Thirty-four percent of Rainbow and fourteen percent of regular students admitted they read for pleasure. Sixty-one percent of Rainbow and thirty-seven percent of regular students revealed that they spent their own money to purchase books.

Fifty-two percent of regular students and only sixteen percent of Rainbow students preferred reading in a group. A high number, eighty-two percent of Rainbow students preferred

reading by themselves. Thirty-six percent of regular students preferred reading alone.

The largest number, thirty-nine percent of Rainbow students, was in the eleven year age bracket while forty-one percent, the largest number, of regular classroom students was in the ten year old bracket.

Fifty-nine percent of Rainbow students and fifty-three percent of regular were comprised of males, while forty-one percent Rainbow and forty-seven percent regular students consisted of females.

The largest number of Rainbow students, forty-four percent, reported being in the sixth grade this year. The fourth and fifty grade regular students was well balanced with thirty-six and thirty-nine percent respectively. The lowest number of Rainbow pupils was in the fourth grade while the lowest number of regular students was in the sixth.

Fifty percent of Rainbow students indicated that it was their first year in a gifted/talented program. Twenty-four percent reported that it was their second year and twenty-six percent stated it was their third year.

Conclusions of Study

The writer decided to use descriptive statistics rather than an experimental design in reporting findings of his survey with children. The writer realizes that the sample of regular classroom students was probably biased. The principals and teachers had informed the students that the writer would be there the next day to ask them some questions. Many of the children seemed to want to impress not only the writer but also

their regular classroom teacher with their responses. The writer kept telling each group that no one would know how each pupil responded since the instrument would be marked and turned in anonymously. Since several of the responses were very high, he questions the validity, especially of the regular classroom students responses.

The Rainbow students were not informed that they were going to participate, and they had already been accustomed to participating in a variety of activities such as filling in information such as they did in this survey. Their responses were not questioned by the writer. Many of the responses by the gifted/talented students in Rainbows Program substantiated findings from other studies in the review of literature.

Recommendations

Although the writer did not find any information on how to work with either Learning Disabled gifted/talented in reading or with underachievers, he realizes that some students do fall in either one or the other category.

The writers recommends an eclectic differentiated approach in reading for gifted/talented students. Many students who enter school already reading should not be slowed down with phonics. On the other hand, a few students may need practice occasionally on phonics rules. In an individualized reading program with these youngsters whereby the teacher follows the recommended steps of having students report on books they have read and to read orally passages from the books, he/she can detect decoding weaknesses and provide remediation.

Some multigrade grouping of gifted readers should be done.

Students should be given an opportunity to hold small group discussions on what they have read. The Great Books program is highly recommended for gifted/talented readers in grades two through twelve. To use this program effectively a teacher needs some training.

Many teachers, not being familiar with the characteristics and needs of gifted/talented students, may do more harm than good causing these youngsters to become turned off on reading and on school. The same mold was not made to fit everyone. Some students may not need a basal reader, especially if their reading level is several grades higher than that of the top reading group in the classroom.

Notes

[1]Glenn Doman, How to Teach Your Baby to Read (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 104.

[2]Doman

[3]Doman, p. 23.

[4]Doman, p. 26.

[5]Barbara Clark, Growing Up Gifted (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1979), p. 46.

[6]Clark, p. 48.

[7]Clark

[8]Michael Labuda, Creative Reading for Gifted Learners: A Design for Excellence (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1974), p. 10.

[9]Labuda

[10]Paul A. Witty, "Reading for the Gifted," International Reading Association Conference Proceedings (Vol. 13, Pt. 1, April 1968), pp. 46-47.

[11]Witty

[12]Witty, p. 52.

[13]Robert L. Trezise, Language Arts (Vol. 54, No. 8, Nov./Dec. 1977), p. 921.

[14]Trezise

[15]Eunice H. Price, "How Thirty-seven Gifted Children Learned to Read," The Reading Teacher (Oct. 1976), p.44.

[16]Price, p. 46.

[17]Price, p. 47.

[18]Jack Cassidy and Carol Vukelich, "Do the Gifted Read Early?" The Reading Teacher (Vol. 33, Feb. 1980), p.578.

[19]Cassidy and Vukelich, p. 579.

[20]Cassidy and Vukelich, p. 582.

[21]Paul A. Witty, "Reading for the Gifted and Creative Student," (International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1971), p. 1.

[22]Witty, p. 7.

[23]Witty, p. 13.

[24]Witty

[25]Trezise, p. 921.

[26]Trezise

[27]Trezise, p. 922.

[28]Trezise

[29]Trezise, p. 923.

[30]Witty, IRA, p. 14.

[31]Witty, p. 15.

[32]Witty, p. 22.

[33]Witty, p. 25.

[34]Witty, p. 26.

[35]Witty, pp. 28-30.

[36]Jack Cassidy, "What About the Talented Reader?" Teacher (Vol. 96, Jan. 1979), p. 76.

[37]Cassidy, p. 77.

[38]Cassidy, p. 78.

[39]Jack Bagford, Talented and Gifted: Forgotten Children (paper presented at Ninth Plains Regional International Reading Association, Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 24, 1981), p. 1.

[40]Bagford, p. 5.

[41]Bagford, p. 9.

[42]Margaret A. Cagney and Elizabeth H. Sakiey, Enrichment Activities for the Gifted Reader (paper presented at International Reading Association Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1981), p. 1.

[43]Cagney and Sakiey

[44]Judith S. Wooster, "Reaching Through Reading", GCT (Vol. 1, Nov./Dec. 1978), p. 35.

[45]Wooster, pp. 36-37.

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